

Common Sense ? The Missing Link in Online Business

I like to think that my approach to business is 1 part experience, 1 part research and 2 parts common sense. I know my business; that's my experience. I read as much as I possibly can to strike a balance in my efforts between tried and true and newer methods of business planning and marketing. But to me, the most important, and often lacking in my opinion, is the common sense part of running any business, especially online.

I do not claim to be an expert in SEO or SEM or any of those acronym concepts. In fact, I'm not sure who legitimately can claim to be. In my observation, the rules to those theories seem to change daily if not more often. However, like most online entrepreneurs, I do try and pick up as much as I can from all sources in trying to market and run my business.

In working on both my own business and my client's, I have found that too often I can get too focused on the technical aspects of my website and business. We are constantly inundated with tips, tricks and techniques for getting more traffic and finding new leads. Please don't think I'm discounting any of those or disparaging those giving advice. On the contrary, I think it is necessary to take in as much information as possible in determining your own strategies. The problem, in my eyes, lies in getting too involved in these "new" concepts and losing sight or doubt your innate sense of how to do things.

I am not suggesting any hot new modes of marketing, nor am I guaranteeing any way of making thousands of dollars a week! I am merely suggesting that before, during and after implementing any new techniques, you always take a look at your website and all your materials from your customer's point of view. Better yet, have someone else take a look.

Make sure that you have designed your site and written your copy in a way that is accessible to both ends of the spectrum: the techies and the technically challenged alike. In a perfect world, each visitor to your site would be very computer and internet savvy. Unfortunately, we all know it is not a perfect world. You must make your site as user-friendly as possible.

I spent a lot of time designing my website. I put a lot of thought into what I wanted to say, how I wanted to say it and how I wanted it to function. Those are all important things to consider and steps that must not be skipped. However, shortly after launching the site I discovered what I could improve.

The first thing I did when I uploaded the site was to inform all my friends and family. I knew within two days that I needed to make things a whole lot simpler! I had not taken into account that I have grown up in the internet age and things that I take for granted like knowing how to navigate a site via a site map or navigation bar are not second nature to everyone. I got the best feedback from my 91 year old grandfather who really wanted to see the whole site and know what it was all about. He tries so hard to keep up with the technology, but using the internet is not his cup of tea.

After speaking with him and a few other relatives, I sat down and took a hard look at my site. I went through and made two ways to get to every single page. I tried to simplify things as much as possible. I didn't change the copy because I had made a point to write copy that was inviting to potential clients from any background. I used my keywords as much as I felt comfortable doing without sounding like a broken record.

Albert Einstein once said, "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not one bit simpler." In our excitement to boost our search engine rankings and generate traffic, I think it's important to remember those words. The more people who can use your site and hear your message; the more customers you will have!

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